

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 KUWAIT 02429 041434Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 AID-05 IO-13 DHA-02 OMB-01 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 (ISO) W
-----050103Z 005937 /46

R 041342Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7929
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KUWAIT 2429

E.O. 11652 ;A
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, KU
SUBJECT: KUWAIT MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS

REF: 76 KUWAIT 4597

SUMMARY: RECENT MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS, PARTICULARLY
CONTENT OF SPEECHES BY KUWAIT WORKERS CONFEDERATION
(KWC) OFFICIAL AND MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND LABOR,
DEMONSTRATE CONTINUED GOK EFFORT, WITH SOME APPARENT
SUCCESS, IN "DEPOLITICIZING" KUWAIT LABOR UNION
MOVEMENT, AND SHIFTING FOCUS OF ITS ACTIVITIES TO
BREAD AND BUTTER LABOR MATTERS. OCCASION PROVIDED
OPPORTUNITY FOR REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIAN GENERAL
LABOR UNION TO EXPRESS NONRECOGNITION OF UN RESOLUT-
TION 242 AND PRAISE KUWAIT'S TREATMENT OF ITS LARGE
PALESTINIAN LABOR FORCE. END SUMMARY
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 KUWAIT 02429 041434Z

1. IN SEPTEMBER 1976, FOLLOWING AUGUST DISSOLUTION OF
KUWAIT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, KUWAIT GOVERNMENT DETAINED FIVE
TOP LEADERS OF KUWAITI WORKERS CONFEDERATION INCLUDING
VICE PRESIDENT HUSSEIN AL-YUHA, WHO IS ALSO EDITOR OF
KWC MAGAZINE AL-'AMAL. REFLECTING IMPROVED GOK/LABOR
RELATIONS, ON MAY 1, 1977, YUHA SHARED PODIUM WITH

KUWAIT'S MINISTER OF LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SHAIKH SALEM, IN CELEBRATION OF MAY DAY AND HAILED KUWAIT GOVERNMENT'S "UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEMS OF KUWAIT LABOR" AND KUWAIT AS HAVING "MOST LIBERAL LABOR LAWS" IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

2. DURING MEETING SHAIKH SALEM TOOK PAINS TO DEMONSTRATE VERBAL SUPPORT FOR KWC, RE REPORTEDLY PLEDGED FROM HIS OWN FUNDS KD 10,000 (\$35,000) TO KWC, ALONG WITH FORMER SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, KHALID GHUNAIM, WHO PLEDGED KD 2,000. HE RECEIVED BIG APPLAUSE FOR DIRECTING RADIO AND TELEVISION CAMERAS NOT TO CONCENTRATE ON HIM ALONE, ANNOUNCING THAT "I AM NO BETTER THAN MR. HUSSEIN" (KWC VP HUSSEIN AL-YUHA). ON SPECIFIC DEMANDS, HOWEVER, MINISTER WAS SILENT. KWC HAD ASKED, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT MAY DAY BE DECLARED A LEGAL HOLIDAY. GOK DECIDED AGAINST THIS FOR 1977, BUT HELD OUT HOPE FOR 1978.

3. AL-YUHA, IN HIS SPEECH, MADE SEVERAL DEMANDS ON BEHALF OF LABOR MOVEMENT IN WHAT AMOUNTED TO KWC PLATFORM FOR COMING YEAR, ALL OF THEM STRESSING ECONOMIC ISSUES:

A) EQUALITY IN LEGISLATION AND TREATMENT BETWEEN PRIVATE SECTOR WORKERS AND THOSE IN PUBLIC SECTOR (AL-YUHA MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY PAID WEEKEND DAYS, ANNUAL HOLIDAYS, GUARANTEES AGAINST DISMISSAL, AND STANDARDIZATION OF TERMINATION BENEFITS);
B) CURBS ON INFLATION;
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 KUWAIT 02429 041434Z

C) SOLUTION TO PROBLEM OF RISING RENTS AND PROTECTION OF TENANTS RIGHTS,
D) DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM FOR ALL NATIONALITIES; AND
E) IMPROVEMENT OF MEDICAL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES.

4. OTHER SPEAKER, DIRECTOR OF PALESTINIAN GENERAL LABOR UNION IN KUWAIT, ABDUL ABU ALAM, EXPRESSED NON-RECOGNITION OF UN RESOLUTION 242, AND PRAISED GOK FOR ITS TREATMENT OF PALESTINIAN LABOR, THANKING IT FOR "TAKING CARE OF OUR PEOPLE HERE."

5. COMMENT: FROM VANTAGE POINT OF MAY 1977, ARREST OF LABOR UNION LEADERS IN SEPTEMBER 76 APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A PASSING PROBLEM PROBABLY BROUGHT ON MOSTLY BY GOK SENSITIVITY FOLLOWING DISSOLUTION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN AUGUST. LABOR UNION LEADERS SUBSEQUENTLY REACHED A MODUS VIVENDI WITH GOK FOLLOWING MEETING IN

FALL OF 1976 WITH CROWN PRINCE AND PRIME MINISTER SHAIKH
JABER AL-AHMED. SMOOTH MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS AND KWC
DEMANDS LIMITED TO BREAD AND BUTTER ISSUES INDICATE THAT
GOK APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN CONTINUING ITS
LONG STANDING POLICY OF TRYING TO DEPOLITICIZE LABOR,
WHILE AT THE SAME TIME RECOGNIZING ITS EXISTENCE AND
ROLE IN KUWAIT SOCIETY. HOLDING MAY DAY CELEBRATION
WITH UNION LEADERS, SPEECHES AND RESUMPTION OF PUBLISH-
ING OF KUWAIT UNION MAGAZINE CAN BE SEEN AS PART OF
CAUTIOUS STEPS TOWARDS POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION NOW
GOING ON IN KUWAIT, ALSO SUGGESTED BY AMIR'S PROMISES
REGARDING REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION. (AIRGRAM
IN PREPARATION WILL PROVIDE FUTHER DETAILS ON KUWAIT
LABOR SCENE SINCE SEPTEMBER ARRESTS.)
MAESTRONE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PALESTINIANS, LABOR RELATIONS, COMMEMORATIVE CELEBRATIONS, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 04-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KUWAIT02429
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770157-0192
Format: TEL
From: KUWAIT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770596/aaaadezc.tel
Line Count: 130
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7882169b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 KUWAIT 4597
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2646785
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KUWAIT MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, KU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7882169b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009